

Record

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WTM enjoys record attendance in '09

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

A record number of participants convened May 1-2 at Colonial Heights Church in Ridgeland for the 2009 Witnessing Through Media (WTM) Conference, which included two new workshops that drew a lot of interest.

"We had a total of 212 registrants at this year's conference, which is the largest in the 23-year history of this event," said Ian Richardson, coordinator of the conference and director of communication services at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board in Jackson.

"We offered 2 new workshops this year in response to the needs of our churches — Lighting for Worship, and Basic Graphic Design for IMAG (image magnification). Both workshops were well attended, so we will look very seriously at including them in future conferences," Richardson said.

The Witnessing Through Media Conference is held each year to encourage Mississippi Baptist churches and churches that partner with the Mississippi Baptist Convention to upgrade the techniques and equipment used to reach people for Christ through media.

In addition to the two new workshops, other workshops conducted at the two-day conference were:

- Fundamentals of Camera Operation.
- How Did They Do That?
- How to Get Started on the Web.
- Web Design — Advanced.
- Projection Systems Forum.
- Creative Production Techniques.
- The Other Media.
- Sound Advice — Basic.
- Sound Advice — Advanced.

The Witnessing Through Media Conference also features an annual



WINNERS — Representatives of the Mississippi Baptist churches that won awards during the Witnessing Through Media Awards Banquet on May 1 at Colonial Heights Church in Ridgeland included (from left) Wayne Grothman, First Church, Biloxi; Obed McCalip, New Heights Church, Summit; Steven Wade, Highland Church, Meridian; Ben Ivey, Mississippi College; Damon Burgess, First Church, Jackson; Pam Warren, First Church, Jackson; Ken Sims, First Church, Jackson; and Scott Voge, First Church, Laurel. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

Awards Banquet during which outstanding local church media productions for the past year are recognized in a number of categories.

"We believe Mississippi Baptists are setting the standards in many areas of Christian media while utilizing the latest techniques and equipment, and we want to recognize the best of those productions each year," Richardson said.

Witnessing through Media award winners for 2009 included:

First Church, Biloxi

- Best Video Program, Church Musicals (Division One), Singing Christmas Tree — 2008.
- Best Video Program, Commercial (Division One): Courage.

New Heights Church, Summit

- Best Video Program, Promotional (Division One): D-Now Promo.
- Best First Time Entry (Division One): D-Now Promo.

Highland Church, Meridian

- Best Video Program, Worship Service (Division One): Singing Christmas Tree production of When Heaven Touches Earth.

Mississippi College

- Best Video Program, Feature Presentation (Division Two):

Academic Competition — 2009 Quarter Finals

- Best Web Site: Mississippi College Communication Department

First Church, Jackson

- Best Video Program, Promotional (Division Two): Catch the Vision Choir Promo.
- Best Use of Media: Carols by Candlelight — 2008.
- Best Video Program, Church Musicals (Division Two): Carols By Candlelight — 2008.

First Church, Laurel

- Best Video Program, Feature Presentation (Division One): 2008 Sertoma of Laurel Christmas Parade.

"We were fortunate in having a group of highly-qualified conference leaders to share their expertise with our folks," Richardson said. "Our prayer is that this training will be of value as our churches seek to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ through the avenue of media."

The Witnessing Through Media Conference is a ministry of the Mississippi Cooperative Program.

For more information, contact Richardson at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3378 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 378. E-mail: irichardson@mbcb.org. Web site: www.mbcb.org.

IMB lifts flu travel ban to Mexico

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — The International Mission Board (IMB) has lifted restrictions on non-emergency travel to and from Mexico by its personnel. The decision, announced May 7, was based on updated information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization.

Though ongoing outbreaks of the H1N1 virus, known as swine flu, continue in the United States and internationally, reports on the severity of the symptoms indicate that the strain is not as dan-

gerous as public health officials originally thought.

Last week, the IMB suspended non-emergency travel in response to the CDC's recommendations that U.S. travelers avoid all nonessential travel to Mexico.

All missionaries who previously were restricted from travel may now return to Mexico, the IMB said. U.S. churches with imminent mission trips to Mexico are encouraged to continue to stay in touch with local contacts and to monitor CDC recommendations as they make travel plans.

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Another shot heard 'round the world

Most students of American literature are familiar with the phrase, "The shot heard 'round the world," from the first stanza of Ralph Waldo Emerson's Concord Hymn, written in 1837. It originally referred to the beginning of the Revolutionary War and described how that rebellion changed the world, but over the years has come to symbolize any event that has the potential to turn the status quo upside down.

We have had at least one such shot in our generation. Almost a decade ago, young Samuel Armas changed the abortion debate forever without uttering a word. He couldn't utter a word because he hadn't learned to talk. As a matter of fact, he hadn't even been born.

Samuel was 21 weeks from conception and still inside his mother's womb when surgeon Joseph Bruner and his surgical team at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville operated on him to correct a spinal birth defect known as spina bifida.

Freelance photographer Michael Clancy was on assignment for USA Today and was in the operating room to record the surgery.

"I could see the uterus shake violently and then this little fist came out of the surgical opening," Clancy recently recalled in an interview with FOXNews.com. "It came out under its own power. When Dr. Bruner lifted the little hand, I fired my camera and the tighter Samuel squeezed, the harder Dr. Bruner shook his hand."

Clancy couldn't believe his eyes. "It's just a miracle picture, a miracle moment,"



FETAL LIFE — Nearly ten years ago, photographer Michael Clancy's photograph of Samuel Armas, *in utero* and just 21 weeks after conception, grasping the finger of surgeon Joseph Bruner appeared in USA Today. Bruner and his surgical team at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville were operating on Samuel to correct a spinal birth defect known as spina bifida. (Special photo)

Clancy told FOXNews.com. "It shows the earliest human interaction ever recorded."

What he witnessed that day changed him from a staunch pro-choice advocate to a crusader for the pro-life cause. He now works as a motivational speaker at pro-life events, according to the FOXNews.com report, telling Samuel's story to rapt audiences.

"And that's what I'm going to do, keep telling this story," he told FOXNews.com. "It can change people's hearts. What started off as an assignment turned into a responsibility to keep telling the story behind it."

Many people who saw Samuel's photograph were equally moved. It proved, without a doubt, that developing babies were not blobs of tissue or "products of conception," the anti-intellectual argument pushed even today by abortion

advocates. It was there for everyone to see — the fully-formed hand of a fully-formed human baby, just 21 weeks after conception.

Samuel's amazing photograph has had a wide-ranging impact. It is credited with helping pass the federal Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act in 2000. Partial birth abortion is a ghastly form of infanticide, in which a full-term baby is pulled alive from its mother's womb and stabbed through the brain with surgical scissors to bring about its death.

Even though most of us don't know Samuel Armas and will never meet him face-to-face, it's hard to imagine a world without him. In America and much of the "civilized" world, Samuel could have been quietly and legally done away with because of his birth defect. His life could have been snuffed out before it began, like the more than 50 million babies that have been put to death in this country since abortion was legalized in all 50 states throughout all nine months of gestation, thanks to the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* non-sense ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Samuel is now nearing his tenth birthday and living with his family in Villa Rica, Ga., according to the FOXNews.com report. He will have to deal for the rest of his life with some of the limitations of his condition that the fetal surgery was not able to correct, but that hasn't slowed him much. He's in the third grade, loves being a Cub Scout, and is a competitive swimmer.

He seems to understand his place in history. "When I see that picture, the first thing I think of is how special and lucky I am to have God use me that way," Samuel told FOXNews.com. "I feel very thankful that I was in that picture."

We are too, Samuel. Would that everyone had eyes to see.

GUEST OPINION:

Who are the real bigots?

By Eric C. Redmond
Temple Hills, Md.



tion of same-sex marriages? Rather, why are we not considered to be people who have a moral standard based on the objective instruction of the word of God — a people also who do not like it when one segment of a society attempts to impose its (errant) views and standards upon the entire society?

It seems that the opposition — those who are for same-sex marriage — should be considered to be people who are stuck in their intolerance toward heterosexuals who use the Bible to find an objective standard for defining marriage.

It is likely, however, that supporters of same-sex marriage will continue to vilify those who oppose them, depicting their opposition as people akin

to those who opposed civil rights for African-Americans four decades ago. This will allow them to gain supporters to their position who would not want to be associated with a vilification similar to being called a racist.

Also, it is easier to make such vilifications than to look at the Scriptures and judge oneself according to the standards of natural and unnatural.

The bigot label should not deter believers from standing fast for traditional marriage. We must believe that God has spoken, that he has spoken clearly on both the structure of marriage and the sinfulness of homosexual acts — acts that are against the natural order of relationships between men and

women that was established by the Creator in the creation (Romans 1:26-27).

We must make God's voice known to our children and grandchildren so that they might be able to articulate the truth with certainty and credibility in the world of ideas on Wall Street and Madison Avenue, in Tinsel Town and Cambridge, Mass.

"Because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of it, the world hates you," says Jesus (John 15:19). So as his chosen, when we oppose the world we will be hated, ostracized, rejected, jeered, and labeled bigots. Yet it is equally true that those who oppose those of us who support traditional marriage are locked in their hatred toward the truth while claiming to be loving toward all people.

It is really they who are the bigots, and such bigots should come out of the closet and be seen for who they are.

Redmond is senior pastor of Reformation Alive Baptist Church in Temple Hill, Md., and author of *Where Are All The Brothers? Straight Answers To Men's Questions About the Church*. His commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press.

Taliban persecuting Christians in Pakistan

WASHINGTON (BP) — Amid escalating violence perpetrated by the Taliban in Pakistan, two reports on the status of Christians in the country contain varying details.

The Washington-based International Christian Concern (ICC) reported that two Christians were executed and others were physically abused by Taliban militants in Karachi April 21 after the Christians protested orders from the Taliban to convert to Islam or die.

A subsequent report by Compass Direct News, though, said the execution-style killings could not be verified. Baptist Press asked ICC to confirm the initial report, and the group was attempting to do so at press time. In their news releases, both Compass Direct and ICC relied on comments from individuals who were not on the scene.

ICC reported April 24 that pro-Taliban graffiti messages were written on two churches in Karachi, including the phrases, "Long Live the Taliban," and "Embrace Islam or Prepare to Die."

Christians complained to the government and then staged a peaceful protest, the watchdog group said. Following the protest, more than 100 masked Taliban militants invaded the community with automatic rifles, causing Christian residents to hide in their homes.

"Some of the attackers entered homes and pillaged money and jewelry and abused the women and burned their properties," Asif Stephen, a Christian in Karachi, told ICC. "The elderly were injured, and one child fell to the ground and died in my friend's arms."

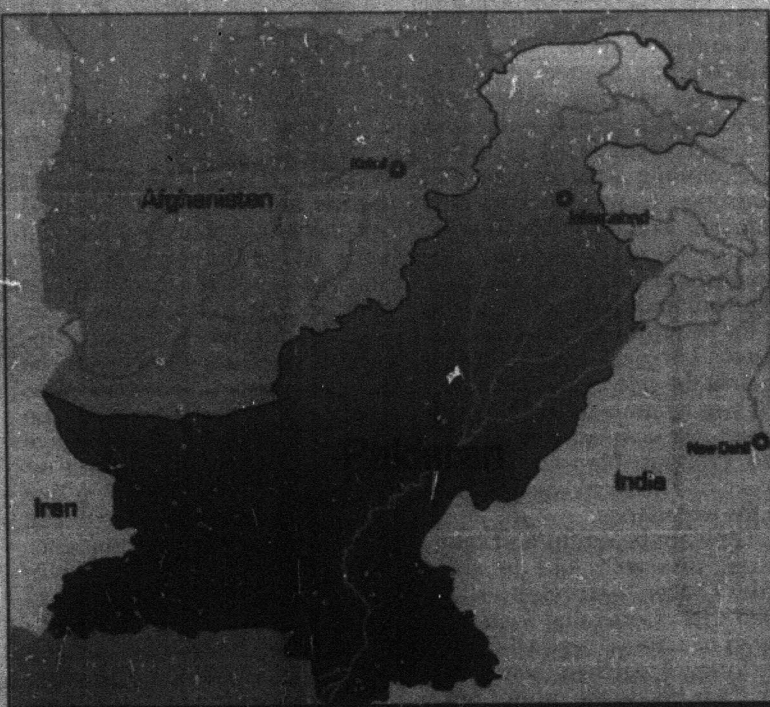
As the militants went door to door, ICC reported that they dragged some people into the streets by their hair while shouting for the Christians to convert to Islam. When two Christians resisted, the militants killed them execution-style in front of their families, ICC said.

Compass Direct, meanwhile, reported that the graffiti on churches called for Christians to convert to Islam or pay a hefty tax for protection. As church members erased the graffiti, armed men intervened to stop them. Soon about 40 others arrived and fired haphazardly at the crowd, leaving several injured, Compass Direct said. One of the most seriously injured was a child.

Police arrested seven suspects at the scene and recovered an arms cache of semiautomatic weapons, Compass Direct said. Another source told Compass that after firing on the crowd, the Taliban ransacked Christian houses and burned down one, also burning Bibles and beating women on the street.

The unrest comes after Pakistani officials agreed to implement Sharia law in the former resort region of the Swat Valley in February in an effort to appease the Taliban, who vowed to end their year-long insurgency in return.

The Pakistani government has created an opening for terrorists to attack Christians indiscriminately by acceding to their demands in the Swat Valley," said Jeremy Sewall, ICC's advocacy director. "Formerly, Christians in the major cities of Pakistan experienced discrimination, but up till now they had not had to fear threats of forced conversion or execution on a wide



scale. This attack is a harbinger of worse to come if the Pakistani government continues to cower in the face of Muslim radicals."

Afghanistan's president, Hamid Karzai, and other world leaders warned that the Sharia law deal could have dire consequences for the region, including human rights abuses and unintended assistance to militants.

"The decision of the Pakistan government to impose Sharia law on entire regions of Pakistan in concessions aimed at pacifying a spreading Taliban insurgency has brought about the unfortunate and expected results of greater persecution of religious minorities in Pakistan," Joseph Grieboski, president of the Institute on Religion and Public Policy (IRPP), said. "Hindus and Sikhs are fleeing the Swat region with no help whatsoever from Islamabad [Pakistan's capital]."

According to a news release from IRPP April 22, Taliban leaders have strengthened their hold in the Swat Valley over the past two years, demolishing about 200 all-girls schools, beheading local officials, and flogging a 17-year-old girl for refusing to marry a militant commander.

"Wherever Sharia has been imposed as the basis of controlling any society — as is the case

in Saudi Arabia and Iran — adherents of non-Muslim traditions and women have been the immediate casualties," Ishani Chowdhury, director of public policy at the Hindu American Foundation, said in the news release. "We join with the IRPP and many other human rights advocates in condemning the events in the Swat Valley that testify to the perverse nature of Taliban justice and Pakistan's inept central government."

The New York Times reported April 27 that the Taliban also has branched out from their stronghold in the Swat Valley to other districts, including Dir and Buner. Residents of Dir were fleeing the area as schools and markets were closed and the town was under curfew.

The Times said the Taliban "took effective control of Buner" a week ago, closing courts and announcing they would soon open courts based on Sharia law.

American officials have urged Pakistan to stop the militants, The Times said, expressing fears that the Taliban soon could threaten the country's civilian government. The Taliban had advanced to within 60 miles of Islamabad, with the government there showing reluctance to intervene, The Post said.

Looking back

10 years ago

Mississippi Baptists are once again tops in the Southern Baptist Convention in Bible Drill participation, with a total of approximately 3,342 children and youth participating.

20 years ago

Mississippi Baptists dedicate a new wing and staff house at Gulfshore Assembly in Pass Christian. The new wing will house 176 people, bringing the campground's total capacity to 528 people. The new staff house will accommodate 60 workers, plus house parents. The projects cost over \$5 million.

50 years ago

Delegates from Baptist bodies around the world gather in Amsterdam to commemorate the 350th anniversary of the founding of the world's first Baptist church in 1609.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

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YOU CAN RESPOND
RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)

2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)

3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)

4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

Minister arrested

BENTON, Ark. (BP) — The number of sexual indecency charges filed against a former Arkansas music minister has grown to 54. David Kent Pierce, 56, had served First Church in Benton, Ar., for 29 years before he was arrested April 24 on one count of sexual indecency with a child. Saline County Sheriff Bruce Pennington announced the additional charges in a May 6 news conference. The charges involve four boys who were about 15 years old when the abuse took place, Pennington said, according to the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette. The claims of abuse against Pierce date back 15 years but the former music minister may not be prosecuted on the older complaints, Pennington added. The alleged victim in the case that resulted in Pierce's arrest is a teenage boy in the church's youth choir, but Pennington said the arrest prompted other alleged victims to come forward. Upon learning of the allegations, the church immediately contacted a state police hotline to report the allegation and terminated Pierce. Dennis Byrd, chairman of the church's personnel committee, told Baptist Press. At the time, the congregation's senior pastor, Rick Grant, released a statement to the media that read: "First Baptist Church has terminated the employment of David Pierce, our longtime music minister, as a result of serious moral failures on his part. The events for which he was terminated occurred several years ago, but left the church no alternative other than to dismiss him. This is a very sad day for me, for First Baptist Church, its staff and the congregation." Pierce had no prior arrests. The child involved is a minor, so police are not releasing any details of the case. In an April 27 hearing, bond was set at \$25,000. If convicted, Pierce could face up to six years in prison.

BIBLIOCIPHER

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004
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MPFR YGCY B APZTX-
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ST ACET PJY PI TNSUY,
KP ES KUBFBY FTECBX-
TYG CEPXN SPJ: ITCF ST
XPY.

GCNNCB YMP: IBZT

Clue: C=A

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Hosea Ten: Four

THE PECKING ORDER

I enjoy walking early in the morning. I especially enjoy it when the weather is almost perfect, and the days of spring seem to be the most perfect of all. The birds are singing, other little creatures are scurrying around, and every plant is in the process of exploding with beauty. One morning I was particularly attracted to the sounds of some woodpeckers. I scanned the trees where the sound was coming from and there were several of the beautiful, redheaded creatures banging their heads against the trees. I did not know if it was a family or maybe just a conference on head-banging that had brought them all together. Every one of them was engaged in the experience.

They are beautiful and interesting to watch, but in short order I began to develop a slight headache. Generally, I am not given to having headaches, but the longer I watched them banging their heads the more I felt a mini-migraine coming on. Soon I walked on though I could still hear them in the distance banging away. I wondered about woodpecker parents. How do they respond as their kids begin to grow up and ask, "What am I going to be when I get grown?" I could just hear the mother explaining to him, "Well son, you are going to grow up, fly around to various trees, and spend a lot of time banging your head into the wood."

I could just hear the wood-

pecker kid as he takes his iPod earphones out of his tiny ears and says, "What did you say?" Then she tries to restate what his future will be. The kid wobbles away shaking his head, thinking his mother does not know what she is talking about. Sometime later, after both the mother and the son have reflected on the exchange of ideas, she brings the subject up again. The mother, realizing that the son may have been confused or bewildered by her comments, thought it wise to explain to him that he was made for that purpose, that what may seem difficult to others he, like few birds on earth, will be able to accomplish. Still not quite understanding, what his mother was telling him, she took him by the wing, went out to a nearby tree trunk, and showed him "rat-a-tat-tat" how to peck on wood.

The dad came in from work about that time and saw what was happening and so he too went over and affirmingly told his son that everything would be all right. Soon he would be able to accomplish what few others in the bird kingdom are able to do. He was a special bird with unique abilities that

enable woodpeckers to peck wood fast and hard.

I thought about earlier as I was watching the pecking and the pounding take place on the tree trunk by the group of woodpeckers, how much like them pastors may be. Oftentimes, being the pastor of a Baptist church is like banging your head against a tree trunk. For those of you who may think that is rather depressing, it is actually not because while the tree trunk may not ever move, there are some things that are happening as you go about your work. In addition, what God calls us to do He also equips us to do. Sometimes Baptist folks can be indescribably inflexible like a tree trunk.

Hardly a day passes that I don't hear of or talk to a pastor who has tried to lead his church in a new direction or to embrace a new idea of ministry and outreach, only to be rejected and rebuffed. Through the years as I served as a pastor, I rarely just came up with a hare-brained idea and threw it out there in the middle of everything without first thinking it through from several angles,

praying about it, and even venturing to get wise counsel if we were to attempt to do a new thing. Yet as I would place the idea in a larger arena, oftentimes like a massive tree trunk the idea bounced off some unreceptive hearers.

What do you do when that happens? Well, sometimes you have to find a new way to go about accomplishing a task. At other times, you realize that it is not going to happen and the only thing that was accomplished was that your head-banging skills remain clear and sharp. Jesus, the master teacher and the world's greatest leader, knew what it was like to deal with folks like us. I think about that verse of Scripture that He spoke in Luke 6:46 when He said, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?" While those first hearers right there at arms length from Him were not responsive, how many of us down through the years have heard Him say similar things and our hearts have responded by saying, "Lord Jesus, I will do what you want me to do. Here am I—send me!"

One thing is wonderfully clear, and that is if we will keep doing what the Lord has called us to do and has gifted us to do, all will be well. So today in the forest around you, keep on pecking.

The author can be contacted at jfutral@mbcb.org.



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

Top

10

reasons

to visit the
GuideStone booth
at the SBC Annual Meeting
in Louisville:

- 10 Analyze your retirement plan with a GuideStone retirement professional.
- 9 Attend a personalized conference to discover how you can afford to retire.
- 8 Get a free cholesterol test (total and HDL) with results in minutes.
- 7 Check your blood pressure and glucose level.
- 6 Get a personalized Heart Health report.
- 5 Assess your health insurance to ensure you have the right plan.
- 4 Receive a free copy of one of O.S. Hawkins' books.
- 3 Learn how your church can save money on P&C insurance.
- 2 Find the right perspective on the current market conditions.

And the top reason to visit GuideStone at the SBC ...

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U.S. ARMS WORLD

Editor:

All across our land, pastors from the pulpit and evangelists from TV and radio are crying, "give, give, give," that we might send the message of hope, love, and peace from our Lord Jesus Christ to the unsaved of the world — and also give that we might send much-needed food and medicines to the less fortunate countries. Billions are given.

At the same time, shipments of death and destruction are going from our own government to some of these very same countries. The U.S., being the world's largest arms merchant, will exchange any method of destruction, from small arms and cluster bombs to fighter planes, for the gold of these countries. Why are we doing this? Because it keeps our arms factories working, which means jobs for people. Jobs for people mean votes for reelection of the politicians representing us in Congress. Many of them turn out to be only corporate toadies who care nothing for the misery of the world's hungry people.

We will even supply both sides of a conflict, if possible. During the Clinton administration, even though we have always supported Israel with billions of dollars in annual aid, Egypt was sold quantities of heavy army tanks and fighter planes. For what? Were they going rabbit hunting in Sudan or defending themselves against Nile crocodiles?

Should we worry about increasing the world's misery, as long as our arms factories are

running 24/7? Do you suppose God views us as a Christian nation, or a nation of hypocrites?

Lamar Wray
Eugene

TRUST GOD

Editor:

I read with great interest your Feb 19 front-page article about official U.S. government discrimination against religious organizations at colleges and universities, and I have some questions I would like for you to answer.

Why is it the government's job to provide meeting places for religious organizations? Are there no private residences in these college towns where they can meet? Are the churches in these towns so destitute that they can not provide meeting rooms and auditoriums so these groups can do God's work? Why would any religious group, or any religion, need to depend on the whim of government officials to carry out God's business.

If a church or religious organization looks to government to provide for their needs instead of first looking to God, they are looking to the wrong master. God will provide. He doesn't need the help or approval of any government to accomplish His will. Anything that a religious organization needs will be provided one way or another by God, if they are really seeking to do His work. If a church or organization is looking for money, or publicity, or grounds for a lawsuit, they should not be surprised if God's answer is "No."

We have all wasted so much

time on empty people and their empty words. Will we ever learn to look to God? He will provide — not Obama, Bush, or any other politician. Trust Him.
Richard Wilkinson
Amory

'EASTER' ORIGINS

Editor:

In the April 25 issue of the Baptist Record, I read in the Guest Opinion of Ted Baehr the following paragraph: "...our Christian holidays have been handed over to the pagans. For example, the English word 'Easter' used in 16th Century Christian scholar William Tyndale's and other English translations of the Bible is not rooted in pagan words, as some pseudo-intellectual scholars of the 19th century began to teach. It is actually rooted in the old German word Oster, which meant resurrection."

Goldwin Smith, author of A History of England (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, Copyright 1966), was professor of history at Wayne State University when he wrote the following on page 14: "The name of Easter comes from the Anglo-Saxon goddess Eostre, who returned in April to greet the spring. The work of modern scholars on English place-names has yielded much information about Anglo-Saxon heathenism. Many modern customs, such as the use of holly and the burning log at Christmas, have descended from the Anglo-Saxon Yuletide celebrations. When the old gods succumbed to Christianity they left in these

things, and in fairy tales and legends, the traces of their reign."

Who's right?
Cecile Alexander
Clinton

REPENT, RICK

Editor:

It would be a great blessing to see Rick Warren repent from seeking the approval of wicked men and instead seek to please the true and living God, as a faithful warrior of Jesus Christ should.

Why is it that when I hear Rick Warren being interviewed, I get the sense that he enjoys talking about Rick Warren? How can he take a position supporting Proposition 8 but then equivocate, to where it sounds like he is parsing words to try not to offend the godless? Is that Christian leadership or political rhetoric? How can he say that court-mandated legalization of homosexual marriage in Iowa is not on his agenda but that AIDS and genocide in Darfur are? Does he get to choose which topics he will and will not take a stand on? Rick Warren is no Christian leader I want to follow.

My long-held rule still holds true: If the liberal media like you, something is wrong with you.

May God change Rick Warren's heart to make him a man of God who will take strong and biblical stands, exhibit godly righteousness, speak truth clearly with a pure heart and grace, and display impeccable moral courage and strong biblical character.

Gary Waters
Tupelo



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. Shelton Church



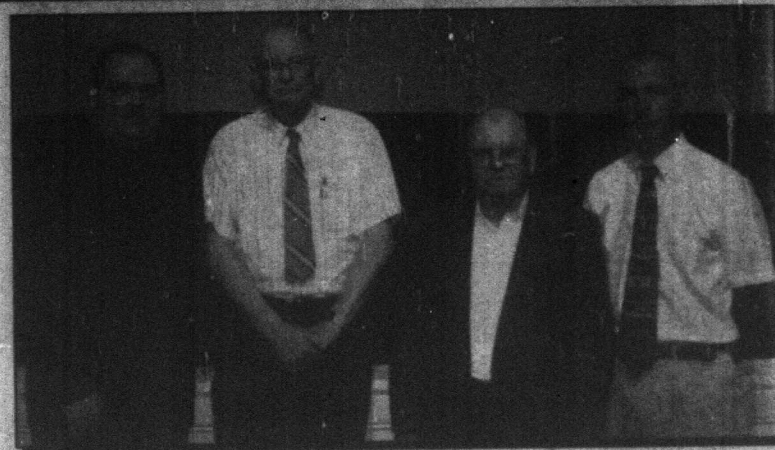
2. New Life Church

1. Shelton Church, Moselle, held a groundbreaking service May 3 for their new education building. Shown, back row, are pastor Charles Brady, Buddy Pryor, and Buddy Smith; front row, Anna Sumrall, Jim Peden, Danny Sumrall, Mitchell Eavenson, and Gloria Rawson.

2. The Pearl River Association presented New Life Church with a certificate of membership in the association Apr. 9. Shown are pastor Rusty Kuhn, AMD Carl Myers, Clarence Perret, and James Dearman, Jr.

3. First Church, Runnelstown, recently recognized James Shoemake and Dewey Hollingsworth as deacons emeritus for their lifelong service to members of the church. Shown are pastor Chris Layton, Shoemake, Hollingsworth, and Greg Carter.

4. Dorsey Church, Mantachie, held a baby dedication Apr. 12. Shown are Mary Alice Loden, Keith Loden, Kimberly Cappleman, Chris Cappleman, with Loden holding Elizabeth (Beth) Caitlyn Cappleman.



3. First Church Runnelstown



4. Dorsey Church

JUST FOR THE RECORD



4. Sylva Rena Church



5. Hand ordination



6. Bailey ordination



7. West McComb Church

1. First Church, Sardis, recognized its Sunday School members who had 100% attendance during the 2007-08 church year: Wayne Brown, Bobbie Taylor, Willie Stepp, Frances Moore, Dot Scruggs, and Lil Scruggs.

2. Cedar View Church, Olive Branch, is having a community singing with Bluff City Quartet and Darrell Hudson, May 16, 6 p.m.

3. Glade Church, Laurel, will host Trevor Thomas May 22, 7 p.m. Thomas is known as "Mr. Drama," and combines music, monologues, poems, sketches, and mime. A love offering will be taken. For information, call (601) 649-4246 or visit www.gladebaptistchurch.com.

4. Sylva Rena Church, Water Valley, hosted the Ole Miss BSU drama team Mar. 29. Shown is the drama team.

5. Fellowship Church, Taylorsville, held a deacon's ordination service for Jonathan Steven Hand Apr. 26. Shown is Hand, Danielle Hand, and daughter Annabelle.

6. Big Creek Church, Calhoun, ordained Bill Bailey as deacon. Shown are Tanner Bailey, Cory Bailey, Chris Corloe, Bailey, and Deborah Bailey.

7. The youth of West McComb Church, McComb, made a trip to New Orleans Mar. 21. Shown are the participants.

8. First Church, Grenada, ordained Sam Cox to the gospel ministry Apr. 19. Cox has been called to pastor Crawford Church, Crawford, Ga. Shown are Cox, Summers Cox, and Jim Nunnelee.

9. Crosspoint Community Church, Hattiesburg, held a ground breaking ceremony for its new facility in West Hattiesburg Apr. 10. Dean Register, founding pastor. Shown are the participants.

10. The Pearl River Association recognized the Spanish mission at Roseland Park on their 10-year anniversary Apr. 9. Shown are Martha Mercado, pastor Marvin Mercado, AMD Carl Myers, Emma Talavera, and Jose Luis Talavera. Shown are the participants.

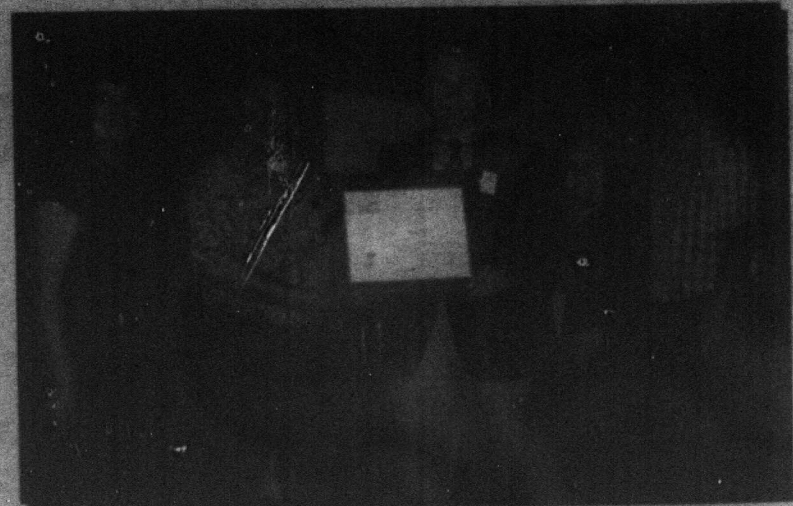
11. The County Line Kids of County Line Church, Union, presented Race to Win recently. Shown are the participants.



8. Cox ordination



9. Crosspoint Community Church



10. Spanish mission anniversary



11. County Line Church

Ministry assistants answer 'royal decree' to Garaywa meeting

By Linda Jenkins
Correspondent

Whether the month of March left central Mississippi like a lion or like a lamb was debatable. The weather at Garaywa Camp and Conference Center offered both sun and heavy rain over the final two days. Spirits were not dampened at all as ministry assistants, church secretaries, and agency and association office works from across Mississippi gathered for their annual conference on March 30-31.

All had come in response to the "royal decree" which had been issued by the event sponsors — the Mississippi Baptist Ministry Assistants Association (MBMAA) and the Pastor/Leadership Development Department (PLD) of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB).

The conference was designed to offer learning experiences, inspiration, fellowship, and fun. This year's conference planners/coordinators were Linda Coleman, ministry assistant at Center Ridge Church, Yazoo City, and Kay McDonnell, PLD ministry assistant.

The conference theme was For Such A Time As This, based on Esther 4:14: "Who knows but you have come to this royal position for such a time as this?"

Featured speaker/Bible teacher for the general sessions was Elaine Rhodes of Richland. Music was under the direction of Susan Wilson, pianist at First Church, Madison.

Participants could choose from ten different break-out sessions. Topics included overviews of studies by Kay Arthur, Beth Moore, and Cyndi Woods. One two-hour session offered practical advice for new and beginning secretaries. Helps were also available on the topics of financial accountability, planning for retirement, and resources available at the Baptist Building.

An actual time of prayer, fashion and health tips, and advice on make-up and skin care rounded out the break-out session choices.

The Monday night banquet was an event fit for a queen. Royal fashions, tiaras, and crown jewels were the order of the evening. The Ragger Roos, a senior adult musical group from First Church, Raymond, provided a time of rousing entertainment.

Other features of the two-day meeting were the MBMAA general business meeting, a silent auction, and the ever-popular door prizes and grand prize drawings.

A total of 16 Mississippi Baptist ministry assistants attended the National Conference and 25th Anniversary Celebration of the National Association of Southern Baptist Secretaries on April 22-25, at LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center in North Carolina.

Jenkins is a retired ministry assistant who served at First Church, Yazoo City.



READY TO SERVE — Members of the Mississippi Baptist Ministry Assistants Association chosen to serve for 2009-10 include (back row, from left) Linda Alexander, Pearl River Association, McNeill, Area Nine Representative; Lisa Thornton, Monroe Association, Amory, President; Robbie Linley, Winston Association, Louisville, First Vice President; Shirley Sisk, First Church, Houston, Treasurer; Vivian Taylor, Wayne Association, Waynesboro, Parliamentarian; Sandy Cammack, Central Church, McComb, Area Seven Representative; Shari Hurt, First Church, Madison, Secretary; (front row, from left) Carol Knight, First Church, Amory, Area Two Representative; Kay McDonnell, Pastor/Leadership Development, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), Jackson, Baptist Building Representative; Jerebeth Mehler, Trinity Church, Olive Branch, Area One Representative; Lula McCaa, Rocky Creek Church, Lucedale, Area Nine Representative; Betty Anne Bailey, MBCB retired, Jackson, Chaplain; Carolyn Tullios, Whitesand Church, Prentiss, Area Eight Representative; Sandi Komurke, First Church, Madison, Second Vice President. (Photo by Tony Martin)

JUST FOR THE RECORD



16. Calvary Church

12. Freedonia Church, New Albany, held a building dedication Feb. 15, adding a children's building.

13. Puckett Church, Puckett, is hosting Ladies Night Out May 16, 6 - 9 p.m. Margo Hemphill, speaker; Kimberly Moore, music; for information, call (601) 942-3479 or 825-5857.

14. Freedonia Church, New Albany: VBS, June 1 - 5, 8 - 11:30 a.m.

15. Calvary Church, Silver Creek: VBS, June 1 - 5.

16. Calvary Church, Waynesboro, recognized the anniversaries of 16 couples who have been married 50 years or more Apr. 19 at Pop's Fish House. Shown are the couples.

17. Center Ridge Church, DeKalb, celebrated luminaria Sunday Apr. 26. Shown, with pastor Roger Carlisle, are survivors Lou Ross, Beatrice Ross, and Edith Hamner.

18. Pleasant Hill Church, Calhoun Association, held a baby dedication Apr. 26. Shown are the participants.



18a. Pleasant Hill Church



17. Center Ridge Church



18b. Pleasant Hill Church

BIBLE DRILLERS



1a. South Louisville Church children



1b. South Louisville Church youth



2. Freeny Church

1. South Louisville Church, Louisville, recognizes its Bible drillers. Children, front, from left: Atlayna Lovorn, Carley Pucket, Kalie Parks; back, Whitney Smith and Elizabeth Ragan. Youth, Nicholas Davis, Erik Davis, Zachary Allen, Emily Davis, Jenna Lovorn, Brandon Hemphill, and Dinah Smith.

2. Freeny Church, Carthage, recognizes its Bible drillers. Children's, Victoria Sprayberry; youth, Savanna Alford.

3. New Zion Church, Crystal Springs, recognizes its Bible buddies: B.J. Yarbrough, Rylee Young, Tristan Dear, and Will Smith.

4. Leflore Church, Holcomb, recognizes its Bible buddies. Shown are the Bible buddies.

5. First Church, Carthage recognizes its Bible drillers. Shown are the children's drillers and youth drillers.

6. First Church, Kosciusko, recognizes its Bible drillers: Sydney Rawson, Carley Quillin, Traci McGee, Noah Frank, Ty Magee, Merritt Blackwell, Michael Bennett, Amanda Frank, and Julie Bennett.



3. New Zion Church



4. Leflore Church



5a. First Church Carthage children



5b. Church Carthage youth



6. First Church Kosciusko

FBC SHERIDAN, ARKANSAS, is immediately accepting resumes for a full-time pastor. Please submit resumes to Tucker Patterson, attn: pastor search committee, P.O. Box 332, Sheridan, Arkansas 72150.

MUSIC MINISTER: COVENANT Baptist Church, Collierville, Tenn., a conservative church with a traditional worship style, is seeking a full-time minister of music. Resumes will be accepted until June 15, 2009. You may mail your resume to personnel committee, Covenant Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1165, Collierville, TN 38027 or email to drsam@covenantontheweb.org.

ASSOCIATE PASTOR IN TAIWAN. Grace Baptist Church in Taipei Taiwan is seeking a full-time associate pastor for its large, growing English-language congregation. For more information or to send resumes, contact Nick Brideson at nbrideson@hotmail.com.

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EMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH, Greenville, Miss., is seeking God's man for our Senior Pastor position. We are a contemporary styled Southern Baptist church in the heart of the Delta. Send resumes to Cecil Carter, 235 Possum Ridge Road, Hollandale, MS 38748-3756.

OAK HILL IN MERIDIAN, IS SEEKING a position of a part-time minister of youth. Call 601-482-5583.

SUMMER YOUTH WORKER: EASTSIDE Baptist Church, Belzoni, Miss. Send resume to Eastside Baptist Church, 808 Virginia Street, Belzoni, MS 39038. Or email to eastsidebaptist@bellsouth.net. Call 662-247-3844 M-F 8-12 or leave a message.

BIBLE DRILLS

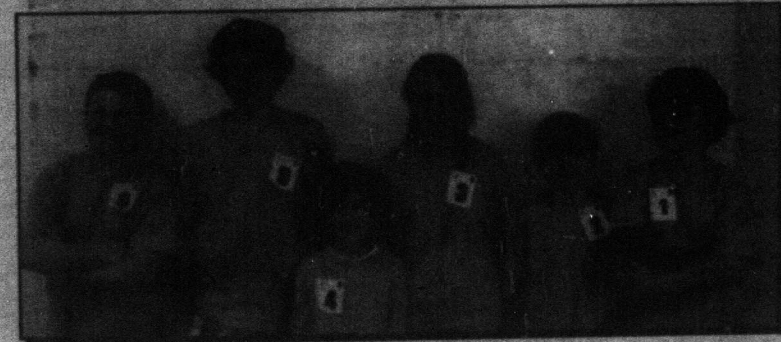
1. First Church, Philadelphia recognizes its Bible drillers. Shown are the participants.
2. Rocky Point Church, Carthage, recognizes its Bible drillers. Shown are the participants.
3. Immanuel Church, Greenwood, recognizes its Bible drillers. Shown are Jon Conway, J.J. Storey, Riley Williams, Anna Robertson, Dallen Dunn, Jayson Jacks. Bea Ellis, leader.



1. First Church Philadelphia



2. Rocky Point Church



3. Immanuel Church

COLLEGE AND SEMINARY NEWS



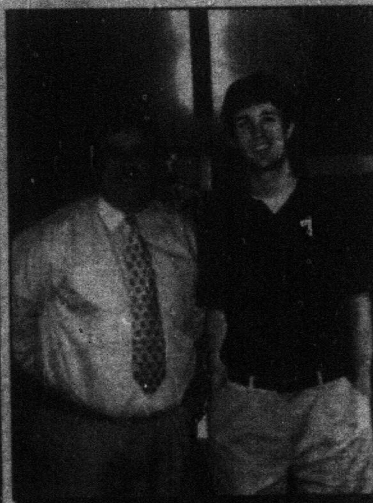
1. Blue Mountain College BSU

1. Thirty-one members of the Blue Mountain College BSU will soon embark on summer missions across the United States and three foreign countries, including Nepal, Peru, and the Ukraine. The BMC students recently took part in a summer missions commissioning service at Lowrey Memorial Church in Blue Mountain. Shown are the missionaries.
2. The Mississippi College School of Law students recently selected adjunct professors of the year: Mississippi Supreme Court Justice Jess H. Dickinson and Ken Harmon of the Brunini Grantham Grower & Hewes law firm.
3. William Carey University will hold five graduation ceremonies. The ceremony for students receiving graduate degrees from the Hattiesburg campus May 15 at 7 p.m. in the Smith Auditorium. Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), will be the speaker. The ceremony for students receiving undergraduate degrees in the Noonkester School of Arts and Letters, the Fial Asbury School of Nursing and the School of Natural

and Behavioral Sciences is May 16 at 9:30 a.m. Aubrey Lucas, president emeritus and professor of higher education at the University of Southern Mississippi will be the speaker. Students receiving undergraduate degrees in the School of Business, School of Education, the Cooper School of Missions and Biblical Studies and the Winters School of Music will graduate May 16 at 1 p.m. Jon Stephen Kennedy, an attorney with the law firm of Baker Donelson in Jackson, will be the speaker. The ceremony for Gulfport graduate and undergraduate students is May 16 at 4 p.m. in Smith Auditorium. Judge Louis Guirola Jr., U. S. District Court, Southern District Mississippi, will be the speaker. Nursing graduates on the New Orleans campus will graduate May 12 at 6 p.m. in Leavell Chapel on the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary campus. Charles "Chuck" Kelley, Jr., president of the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (NOBS), will be the speaker. The Hattiesburg campus ceremonies will take place in Smith Auditorium in Thomas Fine Arts Center. For graduation information call the Office of the Registrar at (601) 318-6195.

STAFF CHANGES

1. Bobby Douglas, AMD for the Mid-Delta Association, is retiring. His last day in the office is June 30, and a reception in his honor will be held at the associational office June 22, 6-8 p.m.
2. Evergreen Church, Shubuta, has called Matt Reid as youth minister. Shown are pastor John Franklin and Reid.



1. Franklin and Reid



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REVIVALS AND HOMECOMINGS

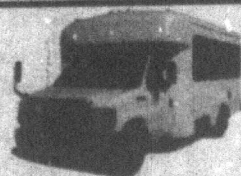
1. Calvary Church, Louisville: Memorial Sunday, June 14; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; covered dish lunch, noon; cemetery fund offering.
2. Unity Church, Magnolia: Revival, May 31 - June 3; Sun., 11 a.m., followed by dinner on the ground and 7 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Randy Roberts, speaker.
3. Toomsaba Church, Toomsaba: 125th anniversary, May 24; services, 11 a.m., followed by lunch and other activities.
4. Bellevue Church, Pontotoc County: Homecoming, May 17; services, 11 a.m., followed by fellowship meal and afternoon singing. David Ard, speaker; Tommy Inmon, pastor.
5. Cedar Bluff Church, Clay County: Revival, May 31 - June 3; Johnny Tucker, speaker, Mac Pace, music.
6. Faith Church, Silver Creek: Revival, May 17 - 18 and 24 - 25; Sundays, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mondays, 7 p.m.; covered dish meal, 6 p.m. evenings; Leon Ballard, speaker; Sue Ballard, music; Ronald Ballard, pastor.
7. Blackwater Church, Kemper County: Homecoming and revival, May 17 - 20; Sun., 11 a.m., followed by lunch; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Jimmy Garrard, speaker; Jimmy Sanders, pastor.
8. Trinity Church, Pearl: Revival, May 17 - 20; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Bobby

Dungan, Roger Lee, Calvin Williams, and William McWilliams, speakers; David McNeill, music.

9. Clear Branch Church, Wesson: Homecoming, May 17; gospel singing, 9:15 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m., followed by covered dish dinner; Guy Burke, speaker; Crystal River, music.
10. Roundaway Church, Doddsville: Homecoming, May 24; services, 10:30 a.m., followed by noon meal and fellowship.
11. Bethel Church, Oxberry: Homecoming, May 24; worship, 11 a.m., followed by covered dish lunch and local entertainment.

12. Pleasant Ridge Church, Woodland: 150th anniversary, May 23; 10:30 a.m., featuring a historical video, outside games, and food from bygone days. Danny Bryant, pastor.

13. Canaan Church, Benton - Tippah Association: Revival, May 25 - 28, 7 p.m. nightly; Tim Bass, speaker. Homecoming, June 7; worship, 11 a.m., followed by noon meal and afternoon singing with the Mike Turner Family. Paul Adams, pastor.



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Mr. & Mrs. Dan W. Southernland
Mrs. Mary Frances Jones
Mr. & Mrs. Paul D. Allen
Virginia Jones
Ms. Theresa T. Conerly
Jim Kiker
Mr. & Mrs. Edward M. Connolly
Laura Kitchens
Mr. & Mrs. Don Martin
Miss Tiffany Kroush
Mrs. Marie M. Scott
Mrs. Ruby Lea
Mrs. Johnnie W. Brock
Mrs. Gladys Leach
Mr. & Mrs. Lendon E. Brown
Mr. Leslie Frank Lee
Mr. & Mrs. Larry W. Magee
Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth E. Lee
The Children of Millford & Eural Dene Cole
Bob Lindsey
Dr. & Mrs. Phillip B. Murray
Beana Logan
Mr. & Mrs. John F. Miller Jr.
Dwight Long
Ralph, Mildred & Nancy Gardner
Max Lovett
FBC-Bude
Bill Lovorn
Mrs. Arlene Collier
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Allen & Family
Dr. James M. Marble
Mr. & Mrs. Stuart Allen
Mrs. Inez Merler
Wallace & Helen Johnson
Carl Marshall
Mr. & Mrs. John F. Miller Jr.
Melanie Martin
Pat Dye
Jannin Lee
Mrs. Ruby Mae Matheny
Angela & Brad Griffith
Mrs. Nancy K. McInerney
Mr. & Mrs. Ira Lee Kirkpatrick Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Ainsworth
Dora McCarty
Mr. & Mrs. Herbert D.

Smells
Mary McCollum
Mr. & Mrs. Jean W. Johnson
Mrs. Mary L. McCollum
Dr. & Mrs. Linuel D. Jayroe
Wallace & Helen Johnson
Dr. Harvey Fred McCrory
DeWitt & Kathryn Craft
Mrs. Alice McGahey
Mr. & Mrs. Dan W. Southernland
Mrs. Effie McKellar
Mr. & Mrs. Dan W. Southernland
Mrs. Cora McKibben
Dr. & Mrs. Harold Ward
Ethel B. McKinley
Mr. & Mrs. Glen D. Fortenberry
Mrs. Jennette McKinney
Mr. Michael Filgo
Mrs. Annie McManus
Mr. & Mrs. Dan W. Southernland
Margaret McMillan
Mr. & Mrs. Clyde Woods
Mrs. Mary McMullen
Mrs. Lucille H. Harris
Wayne Middleton
Bill & Diane Callender
Bill Miller
Mrs. Manette H. Miller
Lavelle Brackman Mills
T.E.L. SSC, Dixie BC-Hattiesburg
Mrs. Cln R. Mills
Dr. & Mrs. Linuel D. Jayroe
Mrs. Myrtle Mills
Mr. & Mrs. Lendon E. Brown
Sister of Mr. Noah Mills
Mr. & Mrs. Lendon E. Brown
Kathryn B. Moody
Mrs. Robert Applewhite
Calvin Moore
Dungan Engineering P.A.
Dennis Morgan
Mr. & Mrs. Eddy McGinnis
Patsy Morris
Jerry Dornay & Roy Schilling
Mrs. Dot Nance
East Louisville BC
Edith Kathleen Nolen
Cher SSC, Juniper Grove BC
Raquel W. Oster
Milton Doggett
Rankin Doggett
Walter (Buddy) Doggett
Jean S. Hamilton
Mrs. Ruby Dale White
Ms. Emma L. Williams
Nina B. Oglesby
Mr. & Mrs. Glen Oglesby
Cameron Hunter Owen
Mr. & Mrs. Larry Oakes
Mr. Charles Palmer
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Gaddis
Mr. & Mrs. Eugene L. Culpepper
Dewey Potts
Mrs. Faye Simmons
Dr. Travis Pince
Mr. & Mrs. Lester Bellah
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas H. Martin
Mrs. Helen A. Petty
Jo & Jimmie Smithway
Jesse Potts
Cecil Rhodes SSC, FBC-Brookhaven
Travis Prence
Landale County Baptist Assoc
Mr. Homer E. Pitts
Mr. & Mrs. James A. Gardner
Dr. Frank Ponder
Mr. & Mrs. Willie J. Mayo
Mr. Bill Pounds
Mr. & Mrs. John McMurray
Mr. & Mrs. B. K. Martin
Jesse B. Price
Neil Smith SSC, Pleasant Hill BC
Tyler Quinn
Mr. Don Evans
Jimmy Ray
Mr. & Mrs. Stuart Allen
Hulon Reed
Mr. & Mrs. Eddy McGinnis
Mrs. Mavis Reed
East Louisville BC
Gladys G. Reeves
Leggett & Letha Greer
Reggie Rester
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry W. Cuevas
W. F. Richardson
Mr. & Mrs. Jim Huest
Charlotte Robinson
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Allen & Family
Mrs. Eunice Rodgers
Bobbie Dickey
Frances Livingston
Clinton Russell
Mr. & Mrs. John Adcock
Mrs. Laverne Russell
Mr. & Mrs. Dan W. Southernland
Louis Scheider
Mr. & Mrs. Douglas Card
Mr. & Mrs. John F. Miller Jr.
Prescott "Peck" Sherman
Mrs. Mary Allen Varnell
Bernice Simmons
Mr. & Mrs. Rodney Bond
Mrs. Ruby Simmons
Mr. & Mrs. Clifton Porter
Mrs. Addie M. Holloway
Mrs. Ruth Skinner
Mr. & Mrs. George M.

The Baptist Children's Village hosted an open house for the Ramey Cottage, named for the late Tommy Ramey, located on the newest BCV campus in the Nanih Waiya Community in Winston County. The event provided an opportunity for guests to tour the new facility as well as recognize many from the surrounding communities and throughout the state for their generous contributions both financially and in-kind to the project. More than 100 guests attended the event.



At the Ramey Cottage open house, The Baptist Children's Village recognized Mrs. Juanita R. Miller (second from left). An anonymous gift was given to The BCV in her honor to furnish the Ramey Cottage kitchen. She is pictured (l to r) with her daughters Julie Kathy Russell and Fairba R. Cade and her granddaughter and BCV Public Relations Associate, Celeste Cade.



The family of the late Mr. R. J. Edwards attended the Ramey Cottage open house. The living room and dining room furniture were given by the family in his memory. Rev. Wayne Edwards (back row center), son of Mr. R. J. Edwards, serves as a trustee for The Baptist Children's Village.

Eagle
Jo & Jimmie Smithway
Jeanette Sligh
Mr. & Mrs. Don Martin
Mr. Hubert L. Smith
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmie L. Manton
Mrs. Billie Smith
Mr. & Mrs. Theron Poole
Mrs. Madeline Smith
Eddie & Jane Woodruff
Margaret Smith
Carl & Geraldine Deloach
Lindsey, Kristi, & Family
Mrs. Evelyn Stevens
Mrs. Allyne Statham
James & Betty Smith
Glenda Stewart
Ralph, Cheryl Leigh & Mary Lynn Perkins
William Alonzo "Bill" Stiles
Linda Beasley
Cynthia Davis
Dorothy Sullivan
Mr. & Mrs. Jack McRee
Mr. Jerry Sullivan
Lee Audis Jayroe
Linuel & Dianne Jayroe
Tim & Linda Pepper
Mrs. Neil G. Taylor
Mrs. Elizabeth Graves
Mary Terrell
Mr. & Mrs. John F. Miller Jr.
Celeste Nicole Todd
Mr. & Mrs. Curtis McNeil
Mrs. Annie Bess Todd
Mrs. Lee Audis Jayroe
Dr. Linda Pepper
Burke Travis
DeWitt & Kathryn Craft
Inez Treadway
Mr. Scott Treadway
Jimmy Trutt
Dr. & Mrs. Robert M.

Harvey
Fred Turnage
Ms. Jewell Turnage
Dr. Tuten
Mr. & Mrs. B. R. Taylor
Paula Vaughn
Adult IV SSC, McCool BC-McCool
Mrs. Edna Vaughn
Watkins SSC, FBC-Collins
Jo Ann Cloy Wallace
Junior & Sandy Moore
Ben Warren
Bob & Michelle Poe
Frankie West
Mr. & Mrs. Earl L. Harris Jr.
Mr. Joe Westmoreland
Arlington Heights BC-Pascagoula
John H. "Bubba" White, Jr.
Billy & Tanya Moore
Mrs. Clara White
Mr. & Mrs. Oliver N. King
Dorothy Wilkinson
Mr. & Mrs. James E. Clark
Mr. & Mrs. Shelton Little
Dr. & Mrs. Phillip B. Murray
Mr. & Mrs. Bill Richardson
Maydelle K. Williams
Mr. & Mrs. Larry Fisher
Mr. & Mrs. Oakley Langford
Frances Lee Wong
Mr. & Mrs. Stuart Allen
Mr. E. L. Bennett Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. Floyd E. Fuqua Jr.
Leon Young
Leander County Baptist Assoc
Mrs. Marie Zimmerman
Mrs. Julia Mullins

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

Abigail: Living with a Difficult Husband

1 Samuel 25:2-3, 18-19, 23-31, 36-38, 39b

By Arthur Story

How does a godly wife live with a difficult husband? Or, for that matter, how does a godly husband live with a difficult wife? This week our lesson focuses on Abigail and what we can learn from her life about living with a difficult spouse. Some of us might want to slip past this lesson because we don't consider our spouses to be difficult. But, in a world filled with divorce, marital discord, deception and more, it behooves us all to examine Abigail's life and how she lived with a very difficult husband. This is especially true because the three elements we'll look at in Abigail's life are beneficial for those with healthy marriage relationships, those living with a difficult spouse, and those given the opportunity to provide counsel to others dealing with difficulty in their marriage relationships.

Her Character
(1 Samuel 25:2-3)

The first element necessary for living with a difficult spouse that is revealed in Abigail's life is her character. Even the most cursory reading of our text reveals that character is essential in living with a difficult spouse. Character is what enables people to do what is right even in the most trying of circumstances. It provides the foundation for all one's decisions and actions.

Our text reveals that Abigail and Nabal were truly a picture of the old saying, "opposites attract." How opposite were they? In most areas we don't know how different they truly were, but when it comes to character we have a keen insight into both Nabal and Abigail. Nabal was nothing like his forefather Caleb or his wife Abigail. He was a harsh and cruel man. He was a



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man that intentionally caused hardship for others. Abigail, on the other hand, was a woman of "good understanding" (NKJV). She was a woman with moral discernment that was based on God's standard and was lived out in her life.

Her Conduct

(1 Samuel 25:18-19, 23-31)

The second element necessary for living with a difficult spouse that is revealed in Abigail's life is her conduct. Abigail's character translated into her actions. She lived out her convictions even while living with a difficult husband that was void of a godly temperament.

When David's young men came to Nabal requesting provisions, Nabal dealt with them in an unkind manner. He was harsh, deceptive, arrogant, and thoughtless about the consequences of his actions. After David's young men left, one of Nabal's young men informed Abigail of what Nabal had done and encouraged her to take action. Abigail's conduct is a picture of her inward char-

acter. See goes to David in humility seeking forgiveness.

Some people that live with a difficult spouse are quick to lash out at others and think only of protecting themselves. Abigail didn't do this. Instead, she sought to fix a wrong. She didn't lash out at her husband for his foolishness. In addition, she didn't verbally attack David in an attempt to rationalize away Nabal's behavior and protect her own interests. Abigail went to David with the requested provisions, sought his forgiveness in the matter, assumed responsibility for the situation, and provided David with godly counsel concerning the current situation and his future.

Her Commitment

(1 Samuel 25:36-38, 39b)

The third element necessary for living with a difficult spouse that is revealed in Abigail's life is her commitment to her spousal responsibilities. Abigail willingly chose to remain committed to fulfilling her responsibilities in her relationship with Nabal even though he was a difficult man who has unworthy of respect or admiration. This commitment

led Abigail to take action to protect Nabal in spite of himself and also to inform him of the actions she had taken.

After Abigail went out to meet David, she didn't attempt to hide what she had done from her husband. As a godly wife, Abigail knew that she had a responsibility to Nabal to disclose what she had done and how she had allocated household resources. Abigail waited for the appropriate time and she told him everything. Based on her previously revealed character, it is unlikely that she attacked Nabal with her righteousness or even berated him for his foolishness. Instead, Abigail most likely went to Nabal with the same humility with which she had gone to David and simply told him exactly what she had done.

How does one go about living with a difficult husband, or wife? Follow Abigail's example; Grow in godly character, act in a manner that is conducive with that character, and remain committed to fulfilling spousal responsibilities.

Story is Minister of Education, First Church, Louisville.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE
Corruption: A Path to Nowhere

Micah 3:1-2, 5-7, 9-12

By Beth S. Bowman

Don't you know?
(Micah 3:1-2)

This passage begins with a question for the leadership of the Israel, "Aren't you supposed to know what is just?" (HCSB) The word of God has instructions for all men but those that lead the church are called to a higher standard. Previously, Micah addressed his comments to God's people in general. Now he specifically speaks to their leaders, because they have both a special responsibility and accountability before God. I feel the question is posed to provoke thought and self reflection. It is sort of like asking a doctor, "Aren't you supposed to know what medicine to take?" Or it is like asking a math teacher, "Don't you know how to add?" They couldn't use the excuse that Jeremiah mentions in

5:4, "For they don't understand the way of the Lord, the justice of their God." The leadership should know, teach and LIVE a just and upright life. Micah illustrates their disobedience in a graphic and memorable way, "but you are the very ones who hate good and love evil. You skin my people alive and tear the flesh from their bones." (NLT) Yuck! This metaphor illustrates the leadership as devouring people for their own profit. The leaders of Israel were using the people and in the process, the people were being kept in poverty and brokenness. John Gusik explains it this way, "This reminds us the people never exist for the sake of the leaders, but leaders are there for the sake of the people. A leader should never serve God's people dominated by the question, 'What is in it for me?' When



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they do, they are like the cannibalistic leaders described by Micah."

Can't you understand?
(Micah 3: 5-7)

What is the consequence of the sin of the prophets and leaders? That God would remove their blessing

and leadership. These prophets who bring false comfort and pretend peace to God's people were to experience the consequences of their actions. First of all, they would not have the guidance and leadership from God for their ability to see and understand the future. They would no longer have the influence and power to speak for God to the people. Second of all, they could be ashamed because of their lack of power. God's blessing would be removed from them because of their sin and disobedience. Lastly, God would be silent in their distress. The voice of God became silent for four hundred years until John the Baptist came in the wilderness.

Shouldn't you repent?

(Micah 3:9-12)

In this chapter, Micah first spoke to the judges, then to the prophets and now he speaks to the heads of the house of Jacob. The rulers of Jerusalem were not much better than the rulers of Israel, and could expect similar judgment unless they repented. The leaders of Jerusalem had a false confidence in religious ritual and form. They were depending on their outer religious expressions and not the condition of their hearts toward God and others. All the while, judgment was appointed for Jerusalem unless they repented. Because of their disobedience and false spirituality, the prophet Micah predicts that all that they had worked for would be destroyed. God's judgment is on the way.

Humility. Self-control. Patience. Kindness. Faithfulness. Honesty. Righteousness.

Can we find these qualities in our leaders anymore? Or have we followed the path of the Old Testament leaders and become as self-centered?

For eleven years I have had the privilege to be supervised by a Godly man who is the opposite of the leadership of Israel mentioned in this passage. Mike May is a faithful servant of the Lord. Because of our work relationship, I have watched him handle stressful church situations over and over with careful Godly intention and kindness. Mike is an example of one who puts others first and lets his love for God and others guide his daily decisions and thoughts. I have never observed him misuse his authority but instead invest his time and energy into developing people after God's own heart. He is faithful, dependable, and wise. I have been watching and learning from him. I don't think spiritual depth or growth comes from sitting in the same office and working together, but I am hoping and praying that some of Mike's heart for God can be witnessed in my life. I promise God, I have been listening!

Bowman is Minister of Connection, First Church, Brandon.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if

submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items are generally not publishable. Photographs can not be returned. Please do not attach photos with tape or staples.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

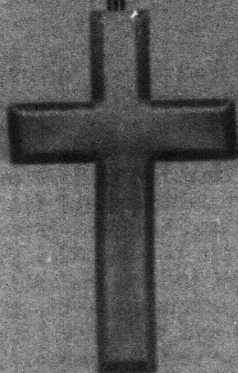
Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

THE BAPTIST
Record

Youth Speaker's Tournament Results

2009



The following students participated in the Youth Speaker's Tournament at Park Place Church, Brandon, Apr. 25. Fifteen students participated. The preliminary round consisted of five participants in three groups. The top two speakers from each group were named as finalists and participated in the final round, with the top four from that group becoming scholarship winners.



PARTICIPANTS

Back row, from left: Betsy McCarter, Blue Springs Church, Ellistown; Hanna Sizemore, First Church, New Albany; Stephen Leavelle, First Church, Clinton; Joshua Lister, First Church, Runnelstown; Wood Dabbs, First Church, Oxford; Shelby Cupstid, McLaurin Heights Church, Pearl; Kirsten Burnett, Mt. Manna Church, Coldwater.

Front row, from left: Charles Wells, First Church, Clinton; Beth Ann McCormick, First Church, Clinton; Camea Dobbs, Briar Hill Church, Florence; Lori Layton, First Church, Runnelstown; Adrian Gordon, Bethlehem Church, Laurel; Shelby Fox, West Poplarville Church, Poplarville; Brittani Clark, First Church, McComb; and Tyler Caery, First Church, Clinton.



Finalists (from left):

Kirsten Burnett, Mt. Manna Church, Coldwater; Hanna Sizemore, First Church, New Albany; Camea Dobbs, Briar Hill Church, Florence; Stephen Leavelle, First Church, Clinton; Beth Ann McCormick, First Church, Clinton; Shelby Fox, West Poplarville Church, Poplarville.



Scholarship Winners (from left):

Hanna Sizemore, First Church, New Albany, fourth place
Camea Dobbs, Briar Hill Church, Florence, third place
Stephen Leavelle, First Church, Clinton, second place
Beth Ann McCormick, First Church, Clinton, first place.